



MOUNT LAWLEY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL DRUG POLICY



Rationale

Drug use is a complex issue and drug use problems result from a combination of many contributing factors that affect the welfare and educational prospects of students. It is recognised that our society is a drug taking one and that some drugs are legal and socially acceptable. This policy aims to contribute to a positive, healthy and caring school environment in which students can achieve their full potential and develop interpersonal skills that will help them face challenges both in and out of school. At the same time we recognise the school's limitations on affecting drug use out of the school environment and the necessity to work with parents and community groups to minimise the harm to students.

A **HARM REDUCTION** approach is the primary focus of this document and is recommended by the Department of Education, the WA Health Department, and the National Task Force on Drug Education. Abstinence is the preferred harm reduction option, although we recognise the need to take the necessary action to reduce the risk and harm faced by those using drugs whilst ensuring that this does not encourage or normalise drug use.

The policy outlined in this document is designed to conform to current Department of Education and legal requirements.

What is a Drug?

For the purposes of this document, a drug shall be defined as:

"Any substance, with the exception of food and water, which when taken into the body alters its function physically and/or psychologically"

This definition includes all drugs (eg. analgesics, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, amphetamines). Solvents (also called volatile substances eg. glue and petrol sniffing), while not classified as drugs, are included in the Mount Lawley SHS Drug Policy.

Pharmaceutical products, both prescription and over the counter products are also included in the Mount Lawley SHS Drug Policy.

Harm Reduction

The Mount Lawley SHS Drug Policy will provide a whole school approach to the issue of drug use which involves education, counselling and appropriate disciplinary and legal action as required.

- The school has a Health Education program, which includes drug education as an important part of the curriculum.
- Appropriate training will be provided to staff delivering the curriculum, specialist staff involved in counselling and, more generally, to the wider staff.
- Drug education will be adequately resourced.
- A healthy school environment will support drug education.
- Parent / community programs will be conducted to inform and empower parents.

Intervention

Mount Lawley SHS does not permit students, while on school premises or at a school function to:

- smoke and/or chew tobacco products,
- consume alcoholic beverages,
- inhale solvents and/or volatile substances,
- possess drug-related equipment such as syringes, bong pipes, etc,
- possess or use prohibited drugs in accordance with the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1981.
- provide to other students, any drug, according to our definition of a drug.

We note that 'while on school premises or at a school function' includes a student travelling to and from school, a school camp, excursion, an organised function such as a social, concert, dinner, school ball, dance, at nearby facilities during the time when a student should be at school, etc.

While on school premises, students should self administer prescribed medicines or other products, but if support is necessary, a form 3, 11 or 12 should be used – these are available online or from the main administration. Refer to Administration of Medication Policy (Education Department 2012) for guidelines on the administration of prescribed and over the counter medications. The supply of prescription medicines to another student is considered a breach of the Drug Policy. Over the counter products, including Panadol, aspirin, vitamins and such like should not be supplied to other students and the provisions of the Drug Policy apply.

Breach of the School Drug policy

MLSHS recognises that punishment often ignores the cause of drug use. Our policy recognises that punishment alone is inadequate unless supported by relevant education and counselling.

Students involved in incidents of drug use at school:

1. will have a parent/guardian contacted.
2. will be subject to an appropriate administrative action – this may include suspension, withdrawal from classes, detention, loss of recess or lunch-time, demotion from office, exclusion from school functions such as camps, excursions and social events.
3. will be counselled by a designated staff member/agency to determine what stage of change they are at ie. Do they acknowledge there is a problem?/do they feel they need to change?/are they ready to change?
4. may be referred to police if involving illegal substances.

In a situation where behaviours indicate possible health and safety risks to the student and/or others:

- an assessment of the condition of the student is made.
- if necessary, first aid administered.
- the student should be taken to the School Nurse, an Associate Principal, the Student Services Coordinator, or in the case of off-campus activities, the Teacher-in-Charge.
- parents to be notified by the Associate Principal, Student Services Coordinator, or Teacher-in-Charge.
- the reporting staff should make documentation to the appropriate person (eg. Associate Principal or Student Services Coordinator, School Nurse).

MOUNT LAWLEY SHS RESPONSE PLAN

